



# COVID-19 Vaccine: Resources for Homilies and Conversations

## **From Pope Francis Urbi et Orbi blessing, 25 December 2020**

*At this moment in history, marked by the ecological crisis and grave economic and social imbalances only worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, it is all the more important for us to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters. God has made this fraternal unity possible, by giving us his Son Jesus. The fraternity he offers us has nothing to do with fine words, abstract ideals or vague sentiments. It is a fraternity grounded in genuine love, making it possible for me to encounter others different from myself, feeling compassion for their sufferings, drawing near to them and caring for them even though they do not belong to my family, my ethnic group or my religion. For all their differences, they are still my brothers and sisters. The same thing is true of relationships between peoples and nations: brothers and sisters all!*

*Today, in this time of darkness and uncertainty regarding the pandemic, various lights of hope appear, such as the discovery of vaccines. But for these lights to illuminate and bring hope to all, they need to be available to all. We cannot allow the various forms of nationalism closed in on themselves to prevent us from living as the truly human family that we are. Nor can we allow the virus of radical individualism to get the better of us and make us indifferent to the suffering of other brothers and sisters. We cannot place ourselves ahead of others, letting the law of the marketplace and patents take precedence over the law of love and the health of humanity. We need to ask everyone – government leaders, businesses, international organizations – to foster cooperation and not competition, and to seek a solution for everyone: vaccines for all, especially for the most vulnerable and needy of all regions of the planet. Before all others: the most vulnerable and needy!*

*In the face of a challenge that knows no borders, we cannot erect walls. All of us are in the same boat. Every other person is my brother or my sister. In everyone, I see reflected the face of God, and in those who suffer, I see the Lord pleading for my help. I see him in the sick, the poor, the unemployed, the marginalized, the migrant and the refugee: brothers and sisters all!*

## **From Pope Francis' Interview with Canale 5 (Italy), 10 January 2021**

*I believe that ethically everyone should take the vaccine. It is an ethical choice because you are gambling with your health, with your life, but you are also gambling with the lives of others.*

## **From Pope Francis' Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See, 8 February 2021**

*I thus renew my appeal that every person receive the care and assistance he or she requires. [...] It is likewise essential that the remarkable medical and scientific progress attained over the years – which made it possible to create so quickly vaccines that promise to be effective against the Coronavirus – benefit humanity as a whole. I encourage all states to contribute actively to the international efforts being made to ensure an equitable distribution of the vaccines, based not on purely economic criteria but on the needs of all, especially of peoples most in need. Even so, before so a devious and unpredictable an enemy as Covid-19, access to vaccines must be accompanied by responsible personal behaviour aimed at halting the spread of the virus, employing the necessary measures of prevention to which we have become accustomed in these months. It would be disastrous to put our trust in the vaccine alone, as if it were a panacea exempting every individual from constant concern for his or her own health and for the health of others. The pandemic has once more shown us that, in the celebrated expression of the English poet John Donne, “no man is an island,” and that “any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.”*



# COVID-19 Vaccine: Resources for Homilies and Conversations

## **From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops statement, 11 December 2020**

Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. We should keep in mind that some people cannot themselves be vaccinated; they must rely on the rest of the community's becoming immune through vaccination so that the disease does not travel through the community and infect them. In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbour and part of our moral responsibility for the common good.

## **From Archbishop of Dublin's Christmas Day Sermon 2020**

*As many of us around the world dare to hope that with COVID-19 vaccines beginning to be rolled out that we may be a step closer to finding our way of this pandemic, and putting it behind us, we must never forget that, in the distribution of the vaccine, there are substantial justice issues of which we must not lose sight of. We have a moral responsibility, as scripture reinforces, to seize this new sense of neighbourliness and understanding of the realities and suffering others are experiencing as a result of this crisis, and grasp the opportunity to each play our part in building a new and fairer society as one global family.*

## **From the President of the Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELAM)'s New Years Message, 31 December 2020**

We must attend and take care of the lives of thousands of our brothers and sisters, strengthening the health system to successfully face the coronavirus pandemic and find a solution to the economic crisis that has impoverished thousands of families [...] There is no doubt that the hope of access to the vaccine for all is an urgent need and a requirement of all sectors of society [...] To get better out of this crisis we must do it together, in solidarity.

## **From the President of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference's Statement, 14 January 2021**

Vaccines work, and they protect against a wide range of illnesses. Because of vaccines, once-universal diseases ... have been wiped out, saving countless lives. To protect everyone against a disease, it is vital that most people in a country be vaccinated. [...] Everyone, including Catholics, has a moral responsibility to protect themselves and others by getting a Covid-19 vaccine as soon as they become eligible for it under the Government's planned vaccine programme.

## **From the Pastoral Letter of the Filipino Bishops Conference, 15 January 2021**

After nearly a year of the pandemic - both in terms of lives lost and the devastated economic impact - we must thank God because scientists have developed vaccines to immunize people against Covid [...] everyone should be aware of their obligation to protect themselves and others from infection and to protect themselves against the further spread of the virus.





# COVID-19 Vaccine: Resources for Homilies and Conversations

## **From the Caritas Internationalis Statement, 5 February 2021, "Urgent access to COVID-19 Vaccines: nobody should be left out"**

*Pope Francis encouraged people to get vaccinated because it was one way of exercising responsibility towards others and collective well-being. He reiterated the need for "vaccines for all, especially for the most vulnerable and needy in all regions on the planet. Before all others: the most vulnerable and needy!" We are at a crucial moment, an opportunity to live the miracle of charity, through addressing together the present challenge [...] This pandemic is a global human security problem that threatens the whole human family. Addressing the vaccines issue from the perspective of a narrow national strategy might lead to a moral failure in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable across the globe.*

## **From the Mexican Bishops Conference statement, 9 February 2021**

It is necessary to consider the purpose and ethical relevance of personal collaboration in the vaccination campaign. Vaccines are preparations intended to generate immunity against a disease by stimulating the production of antibodies. In today's world, the use of vaccines clinically accepted by the international scientific community helps to protect personal health and that of our neighbors, helps to care for creation; it is an action that safeguards the true common good and promotes the true culture of life, based on unrestricted respect for the dignity of every human person and the justice derived from it. [...] We Catholics must not contribute in any way to disinformation because the lives of people, especially the most vulnerable, are at risk. We invite all the Catholic faithful, and all brothers and sisters of good will, to commit ourselves to prevention as part of our daily lives, in order to avoid unnecessary suffering and the eventual loss of life.

## **From the Joint Statement of Caritas Europa and the Commission of the Bishop's Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), 23 February 2021, "The European Union and the Challenges of COVID-19 Vaccines: EU's core principles demand equity in vaccine access"**

*Commitment to solidarity must be the decisive criterion in this historic moment. It is urgent to implement mass vaccination campaigns quickly. We urge the European Union to promote widescale vaccination not only for Europe's own safety and protection, but also for global public health as a public good, benefiting people living in poorer nations as much as they benefit people living in countries with the resources to create and produce the vaccines. Ensuring vaccine access for all – that they are available and affordable – is a global moral urgency.*

